

AN
ACCOUNT OF THE FORMATION,
OF THE
Upper Canada,
RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY,
AT YORK THE 10th JANUARY, 1832,
WITH AN ADDRESS BY THE COMMITTEE.

"Who hath despised the day of small things."—ZECH. iv. 10.

YORK:

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Upper Canada,
RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY.

AGREEABLY to public intimation, a Meeting was held in the Ontario House, York, on the evening of the 10th January, for the purpose of forming a RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY.

DR. HARRIS, Principal of Upper Canada College, was called to the Chair.

The Rev. C. MATTHEWS having opened the Meeting with Prayer—The Chairman explained and recommended the object of the Meeting—whereupon :—

On the motion of the Rev. C. MATTHEWS, M.A. seconded by JOSEPH WENHAM Esq. it was unanimously Resolved :—

First. That this Meeting impressed with a sense of the importance of the diffusion of Divine Truth, through the medium of Tracts and Books, shall now form itself into a RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY, for York and so much of the Province as may be disposed to form Auxiliary Associations.

On the motion of the Rev. WILLIAM RINTOUL, A.M. seconded by CAPTAIN PHILLPOTTS, R. E., it was unanimously Resolved :—

Second. That the Regulations of this Society shall be as follows—(see page 7.)

On the motion of the Rev. WILLIAM JENKINS, of Markham, seconded by CHARLES C. SMALL, Esq. it was unanimously Resolved :—

Third. That this Meeting recognizing the great truth, that the right use and efficiency of any instrumentality for the ad-

vancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom, depend wholly on the accompanying blessing of the Holy Spirit, would now record their sense of the need of the Holy Spirit's influences to render effectual every operation of the newly formed Society.

On the motion of MARSHALL S. BIDWELL, Esquire, M. P. seconded by the REV. P. MAYERHOFFER, of Vaughan, it was unanimously Resolved :—

Fourth. That DR. HARRIS, Principal of Upper Canada College, be President of this Society.

On the motion of MR. F. T. CALDICOTT, seconded by the REV. WILLIAM BOULTON, B.A. it was unanimously Resolved:

Fifth. That the Vice-Presidents and Committee of the Society for the ensuing year, shall consist of the following Gentlemen—(see page 5.)

On the motion of the REV. ALEXANDER STEWART, seconded by MR. TIMOTHY PARSON, it was unanimously Resolved :

Sixth. That a Subscription be opened, and Collection made on the close of this Meeting, to enable the Committee to procure an immediate supply of Tracts.

On the motion of the REV. WILLIAM RINTOUL, A. M. seconded by JOSEPH WENHAM, Esquire, it was unanimously Resolved :—

Seventh. That the thanks of this Meeting be given to DR. HARRIS, for his conduct in the Chair.

On the motion of CHARLES C. SMALL, Esq. seconded by the REV. C. MATTHEWS, M.A. it was unanimously Resolved :

Eighth. That the Proceedings of this Evening be Published.

On the motion of CHARLES C. SMALL, Esq. seconded by JOSEPH WENHAM, Esq. it was unanimously Resolved :—

Ninth. That the thanks of this Meeting be tendered to MR. BOTSFORD, for the comfortable and gratuitous accommodation he has afforded to this Meeting.

OFFICE BEARERS,

FOR 1832.

PRESIDENT,

THE REV. DR. HARRIS, *Principal of U. C. College.*

VICE-PRESIDENTS,

**JESSE KETCHUM, ESQ. CHARLES C. SMALL, ESQ.
JOHN GAMBLE, ESQ. CAPT. PHILLPOTTS, R. E.
REV. CHARLES MATTHEWS, M.A.**

JOSEPH WENHAM, ESQUIRE,.....*Treasurer.*

**REV. WILLIAM RINTOUL, A.M. }
MR. ROBERT THOMSON, } *Secretaries.***

..... *Depositary.*

COMMITTEE.

**Messrs. M. McLELLAN, Messrs. EDWD. GOLDSMITH,
" JAMES LESSLIE, " DUNCAN KENNEDY,
" PETER PATERSON, " THOS. SANDILANDS,
" HUGH CARFRAE, " JOHN ROSS,
" JOHN EWART, " TIMOTHY PARSON.**

REGULATIONS.



I. THAT this Society shall be denominated **THE UPPER CANADA RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY.**

II. That this Society approves of the Principles on which the London Religious Tract Society is founded, as set forth in the Official Statement and declaration of that Society ; and that it shall only circulate the Publications of that Society, or other Publications of a similar character.

III. That Annual Subscribers paying Five Shillings, Currency, or more, shall be Members of the Society.

IV. That Subscribers of Five Pounds, Currency, and Ministers remitting Congregational Collections to the extent of Five Pounds, Currency, shall be Members for life.

V. That a Committee consisting of ten Members, exclusive of the Office Bearers of the Society, shall be annually chosen, to conduct the business of the Society ;—that six, who have most constantly attended the Meetings of Committee throughout the year, may be re-elected for the ensuing year ; and that the Committee for the time being shall be empowered to fill up any vacancies that may occur.

VI. That the Office Bearers of the Society shall be—a President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Secretaries, and Depository.

VII. That Ministers of the Gospel being Members of the Society, shall be entitled to attend and vote at all Meetings of the Committee.

VIII. That all Subscribers shall be entitled to have Tracts and Books to the value of half their Subscription ; and that Ministers, or others remitting a Collection, shall be entitled

to Tracts and Books to the value of half the Collection—on behalf of the Congregation that may have made the Collection—the same being called for any time within the twelve months.

IX. That the Committee shall meet for business at least once a quarter.

X. That this Society shall, to the utmost extent of its resources, encourage the formation of Auxiliary Societies throughout the Province.

XI. That the Annual General Meeting of this Society shall be held during the week appointed for the Annual Meeting of the York Bible Society.

XII. That all Meetings of this Society, and of the Committee, shall be opened and closed with Prayer.

ADDRESS OF THE COMMITTEE.

THE UPPER CANADA RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY, was at its formation well introduced to a considerable part of the Christian Public of York, by the various Speakers who addressed the Meeting. But as this Society contemplates a wider field of operation than the Town of York, and wishes to conciliate the support and co-operation of Christians in the adjacent, as well as the more remote Townships of the Province, it has seemed good to the Committee, to commence the work intrusted to them by publishing this short Address.

The propriety of Associations amongst Christians for diffusing Divine Truth, through the medium of Tracts and Books, is justified by these obvious considerations : that the Press, as well as the living voice of the Preacher, must be extensively employed in illustrating and applying the Word of God ; and that the exertions of many, when combined, are more effectual than they would be if put forth separately, for employing the Press in this the noblest work to which its powers can be consecrated. And the advantages of such Associations are proved by abundant experience. In every age of the Church, the writings of men who have themselves known and felt the Truth, have been useful for imparting the knowledge of it to others ; and in these latter days, Tract Societies hold no inconsiderable place amongst the means that are employed in evangelizing the world.

The UPPER CANADA RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY, it will be perceived, is not a direct Auxiliary to the London Religious Tract Society, as it was conceived by its founders that the Province presents a field abundantly wide

for the application of its Funds, however great these may become.—It is intended, however, that the Tracts and Books circulated by this Society shall be those of the London Society. And forasmuch as it is believed, that the Publications of that Society imbody the Truth of God, it is determined by the second Regulation of this Society, that should its resources enable its Committee to issue any Publications of its own, these shall be of a similar character to those of the London Tract Society.—The London Tract Society has published to the world the following declaration of its conviction of what a Tract should be :—“ A Tract should consist of *Pure Truth*.—“ This flowing from the Sacred Fountain of the New Testament, “ should run from beginning to end, uncontaminated with error ; “ undisturbed with human systems ; clear as crystal, like the “ River of Life. There should be nothing in it of the “ *shibboleth* of a sect ; nothing to recommend one denomination, or to throw odium on another ; nothing of the acrimony “ of contending parties against those that differ from them : “ but pure peaceful Christianity, in which all the followers of “ the Lamb, who are looking for the Mercy of the Lord Jesus “ Christ unto eternal life, can unite with pleasure, as in one “ great common cause. Nor should any worldly scheme be “ interwoven with the truth, or attempted to be concealed “ under its folds. There should not be seen the slightest “ vestige of any carnal end, in any form, or for any purpose, “ however laudable some may think it : nothing but Divine “ Truth, unmingled, unadulterated, and pure as it came from “ Heaven—nt for the whole human race to imbibe.”

In the above declaration the Committee of the UPPER CANADA RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY, do cordially concur—their deliberate conviction being, that Tracts should be not mere Religious Essays, or expositions of human systems of Theology, but expositions, illustrations, and applica-

tions of the very Truth of God. They should be diversified in their subjects as the Bible itself is diversified in its several parts, each yet having one common design, viz. to communicate the *Testimony of Jesus*. They should adapt themselves to persons of every variety of character, and in every variety of situation: and they should have a corresponding diversity in their style, and thus they may consist of history, biography, doctrinal statement, exhortation, textual illustration, dialogue, allegory, poetry. This variety (and it eminently characterizes the Tracts of the London Tract Society,) constitutes one principal excellence of Tracts as it tends to commend the Truth to those who have been little accustomed to think seriously about it, and it enables those who would draw the attention of their neighbours to the all important concerns of Eternity, to place before them within the limits of a few pages, those very Truths which may specially apply to their character and circumstances.

Christians should not require to be reminded, that they are bound by all that is most urgent in human motives, to seek above every other object, the glory of the Saviour; and he is glorified, simply by his being manifested unto men, and received by them. Now the testimony which His people bear unto Him by their lips will do much towards this end, and Tracts are a means, ready provided to their hands for availing themselves of the testimony of others—of those too, who in respect to gifts and the prayerful study of the Scriptures have been most favourably circumstanced for bearing testimony to the grace and glory of the Son of God. And then, while the living voice is limited in its reach, to those to whom it is spoken, and may, as to any gracious effect on the hearers, perish with the utterance of it; the Tract remains, and it may be read again and again by the individual into whose hands it has been

put—it may even pass from him to his several neighbours, and may by each of them be read to a family or groupe of acquaintances, and thus whatever is valuable in its statements, or awakening in its appeals, may be directed to the consciences of an indefinite multitude.

It is not insinuated that the distribution of Religious Tracts should ever supersede the communication of Religious instruction by conversation, yet it may be noticed, that the superiority of Tracts over a spoken communication, which has been adverted to, is enhanced by a twofold consideration:—First, the infirmity, even of many good men in respect to giving Religious Counsel where it is manifestly wanted; and secondly, the reluctance of those requiring counsel or reproof to receive it. Many cannot, or think they cannot, speak as they ought, to warn and admonish a neighbour whom perhaps they see living without God, or trampling on His laws; and they are therefore silent, even when it may be, their own consciences reprove them for a false shame towards their perishing neighbour, and cowardice in the cause of God. And transgressors will often kick against the truth, when it reproves them, because of the person who addresses it to them. Now, the Tract is a bold and unshrinking messenger, that feels no shame in addressing its reproofs to men, be they high or low; and it awakens no hostility against itself, for if an offender feels rebuked by the message which it brings, he may happily bethink himself, that it is the truth—conscience—God, and not a fellow creature, who is his reprover.

These general considerations recommend the circulation of Scriptural Tracts in every community; and there are several circumstances in the state of this Province which give a peculiar importance to this instrumentality for promoting its evangelization.—In the first place, the Population is widely

scattered, and Ministers of the Gospel are few in number.— Secondly—the Province has no indigenous Literature of any kind, if we except Newspapers; and Religious Tracts and Books cannot be extensively imported or printed without the associated exertions of the friends of Divine Truth.—And thirdly—there are many of the Aborigines of the American Continent in the Canadas, and the adjacent regions: and if the Government kindly exerts itself in promoting their Education and Civilization; if different Religious Bodies send them Preachers of the Gospel; and if our Bible Society expends part of its Funds in translating the Word of God into one of their dialects,—then, why should not a Tract Society also give them, in their own language, some written expositions and illustrations of that word?

The Society, whose formation and intended operations are thus announced, has assumed the name of **THE UPPER CANADA RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY**, because, being founded in the Metropolis it would contemplate, through the Divine blessing, the formation of affiliated Societies throughout the Province, or those parts of it at least, which lie contiguous to York.—We are not ignorant that there is a flourishing Tract Society in Kingston, Auxiliary to the London Society, for we have read the eloquent Report of the second year of its proceedings, and we heartily bid it God speed. And should it form Auxiliaries to itself in the Lower part of the Province, we shall entertain no jealousy of its operations.—The word **BOOK**, in the name of our Society, may seem a peculiarity.—It has, however, been assumed into the name, as it renders it more strictly characteristic of the intended operations of the Society, though these may not differ from those of other Tract Societies, since in point of fact all Tract Societies do circulate Books as well as Tracts; and the issue of

Books by the London Society, has in recent years greatly increased.

The above observations are respectfully submitted to the Public, with a view to conciliate support to the **UPPER CANADA RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY**. We crave, in aid of our undertaking, the prayers of all those into whose hands this Address may fall, who desire to see the Kingdom of God set up in this Province, and who know that Revealed Truth is the appointed instrument for its establishment in the hearts of men. For we would remember, that it is equally true in respect to the circulation of a Tract as the utterance of a Sermon—"Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." And we would call upon those who recognize the duty of consecrating their substance to the Lord, and approve of our undertaking, to assist us with their pecuniary offerings. Funds are indispensable to the maintenance of an extensive and varied supply of Publications, and to the formation and encouragement of Auxiliary Associations. And those who may be able to promote the formation of such Associations, we would invite to combine their exertions with us in employing the Press—sometimes, indeed, like the unbridled tongue—"a fire—a world of iniquity"—to diffuse that Divine Knowledge which like a flood shall yet overspread the whole earth.

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